

# CLIFF LEDE

## VINEYARDS

### 2021 CLIFF LEDE CABERNET SAUVIGNON, HOWELL MOUNTAIN

Cliff Lede Vineyards is a family-owned and operated winery located in the famed Stags Leap District. For over 20 years, Cliff Lede Vineyards has prioritized crafting wines of extraordinary quality with authenticity and sustainability in mind.

#### Vintage

The 2021 growing season was beset by a very dry winter. The valley received only half of the average rainfall that traditionally falls in the winter months. Although dry, the mild weather during April's budbreak helped establish healthy shoot and leaf growth throughout May into June. Mid-June saw some of the hottest days of the year, but thankfully were accompanied by cold nights which tempered their effects. Foggy mornings and warm sunny afternoons in August and September ushered in an early harvest of pristine and flavorful grapes. The wines are imbued with a bright fresh acidity provided by the ample, shading canopies, along with the ripeness and allure of a droughty growing season.

#### Vineyards

Exceptional high-elevation vineyards in the Howell Mountain appellation produce intensely concentrated grapes for this wine. Soils are volcanic in origin and consist of two main types: the first is decomposed volcanic ash called tufa, and the second is red volcanic rock and clay that is high in iron. Both are nutrient poor, which stresses the vines, producing intense and structured wines from small clusters and berries. The altitude, climate, and soils combine to create a classic mountain Cabernet Sauvignon with incredible concentration, texture, and structure.

#### Winemaking

Hand harvested in the cool early morning hours, the fruit was immediately subjected to rigorous selection by our three-tiered sorting process, including our cutting-edge optical sorter, to eliminate less-than-perfect berries. The selected fruit was gently delivered to tank via gravity by our crane system, retaining perfect, whole berries. Cold soaks lasted approximately five days, and fermentations were managed by a combination of *délestage* and pump overs. Extended maceration, ranging from three to four weeks, fine-tuned tannin profiles, allowing us to build structure and wine complexity. The wine was aged in French oak barrels, 5% of which were new, for twenty-one months.

#### Winemaker Notes

The dark and brooding 2021 Howell Mountain seems impenetrable, with its black ruby-colored hue wafting a dense layer of iron, minerals, and forest floor aromas. With time in the glass more sumptuous flavors of black cherry, mulberries, and melted chocolate open to draw in the taster. Along the palate, savory ensanguined steak juices, new leather, tobacco leaf, clove, and sandalwood notes frame the fruitier elements in a complex and tasty fashion. Supportive tannins and fresh acidity give this wine a vibrant aura and portend a long and grand life ahead. - Christopher Tynan, Director of Winemaking

#### Analysis

Composition:	91% Cabernet Sauvignon, 9% Merlot
Alcohol:	14.1%
Bottling Date:	July 2023
Release Date:	December 2023
Production:	504 cases